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## Museum of Glass Unites Traditional Elegance with Contemporary Flair

*Ispirazione: James Mongrain in The George R. Stroemple Collection*, on view at Museum of Glass from February 10 through October 15, 2017, investigates the old to inspire the new

Tacoma, Wash. — *Ispirazione: James Mongrain in the George R. Stroemple Collection* is the result of a four year collaboration between artist James Mongrain (American, born 1968) and collector George R. Stroemple. The collaboration between Mongrain and Stroemple began in 2012. Stroemple, an avid collector of nineteenth-century Venetian glass, challenged Mongrain to draw inspiration from the vintage pieces in his collection, giving the artist free reign to engage in a dialogue with any of the objects that sparked his interest. Mongrain, already a highly-skilled maker of goblets in the Venetian tradition, was inspired by the iconic pieces in the Stroemple collection which resonated with his deep understanding of the material and his own personal artistic style. The resulting work is large and powerful, fresh and new, and it showcases Mongrain's incredible hot-sculpting technique, complemented by a delicacy of touch that captures the quintessential character of each mythical creature and historical form. The work is steeped in tradition, yet combines a new energy and vibrancy that makes a profound statement: the heritage of the past endures and can be effectively merged with the dynamism of the twenty-first century.

Stroemple and Mongrain share a common passion for Venetian techniques which resulted in a dynamic new body of work. Mongrain, a self-proclaimed beneficiary of the skills imparted by the Italian masters, is an artist who has taken every opportunity to contemplate the secrets of Italian glassblowing. Over the course of his career, Mongrain spent thousands of hours making goblets and other vessels, practicing traditional Italian methods, until he attained spectacular proficiency. Additionally, this busy artist has worked for Dale Chihuly for the last 24 years, and currently serves as his lead gaffer.

Stroemple is internationally recognized for his contemporary art collection, which, in part, documents the Studio Glass movement in the Pacific Northwest. He has a special interest in fostering creative relationships with artists, and his collaboration with James Mongrain is true to form. He describes their relationship as exceptional:

*"I always enjoy the opportunity to work with an artist to realize a new body of work, work that perhaps would not have been made had we not entered into the complicated collaboration of artist and patron. There is no doubt in my mind that James is an artist who looks to the past for inspiration, but he translates the rich Venetian legacy using his exceptional vision. I appreciate that James pushed himself to make his best work to date for the Stroemple Collection."*

*Ispirazione: James Mongrain in the George R. Stroemple Collection* includes over 150 unique artistic works and covers a series of five collections—the historic replica series, as well as the Adriatico, Atlantis, Poseidon, and Arcobaleno. Mongrain will be working with the MOG Hot Shop team from March 15-19 and will be conducting a talk about his exhibition on Sunday, March 19 at MOG.

#### About Museum of Glass

Located in Tacoma, Washington, the Museum of Glass is a premier contemporary art museum dedicated to glass and glass making in the west coast's largest and most active museum glass studio. Opened in 2002, the Museum has established a reputation for hosting impactful and engaging Artist Residencies, organizing nationally traveling exhibitions, and creating unique programs for visitors while building a growing permanent collection chronicling the contemporary glass art movement. Museum of Glass provides an environment for artists and the public to ignite creativity, fuel discovery, and enrich their lives through glass and glassmaking. Museum of Glass is a non-profit organization sponsored in part by the City of Tacoma Arts Commission, ArtsFund, The Greater Tacoma Community Foundation, The Dimmer Family Foundation, and the Driscoll Foundation.



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